

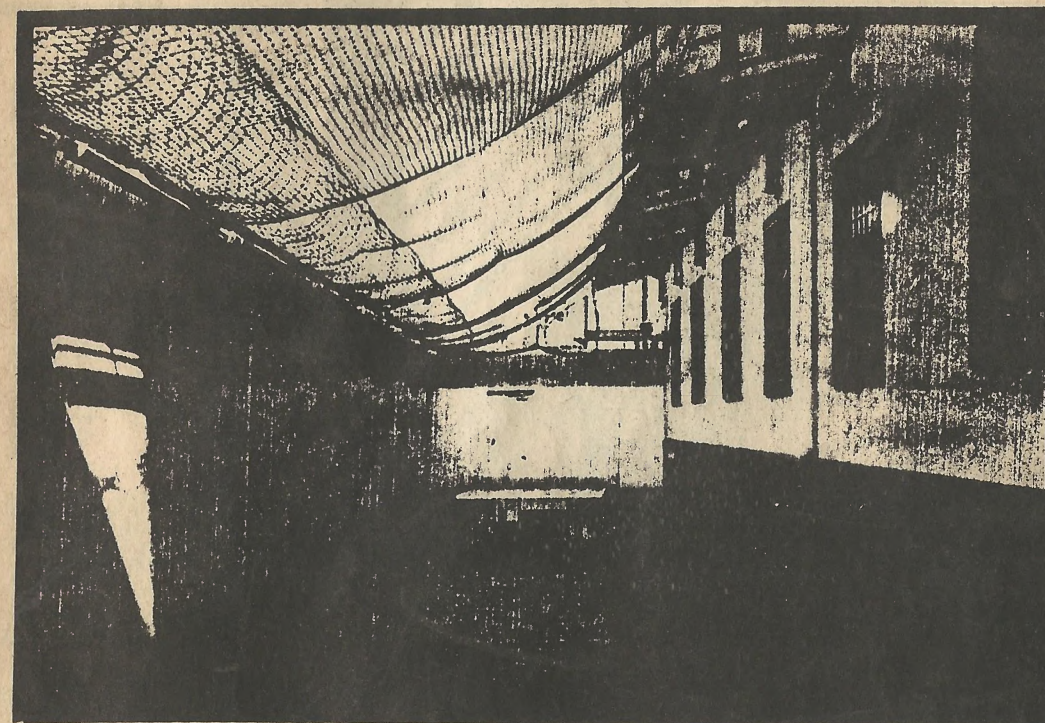


You don't have to be young to throw a brick -
Belgium General Strike in 1961.

VANCOUVER ANARCHIST
BLACK CROSS

P.O. Box 2881, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3X4 CANADA

POLITICAL
PRISONERS ON



HUNGERSTRIKE
IN
WEST GERMANY

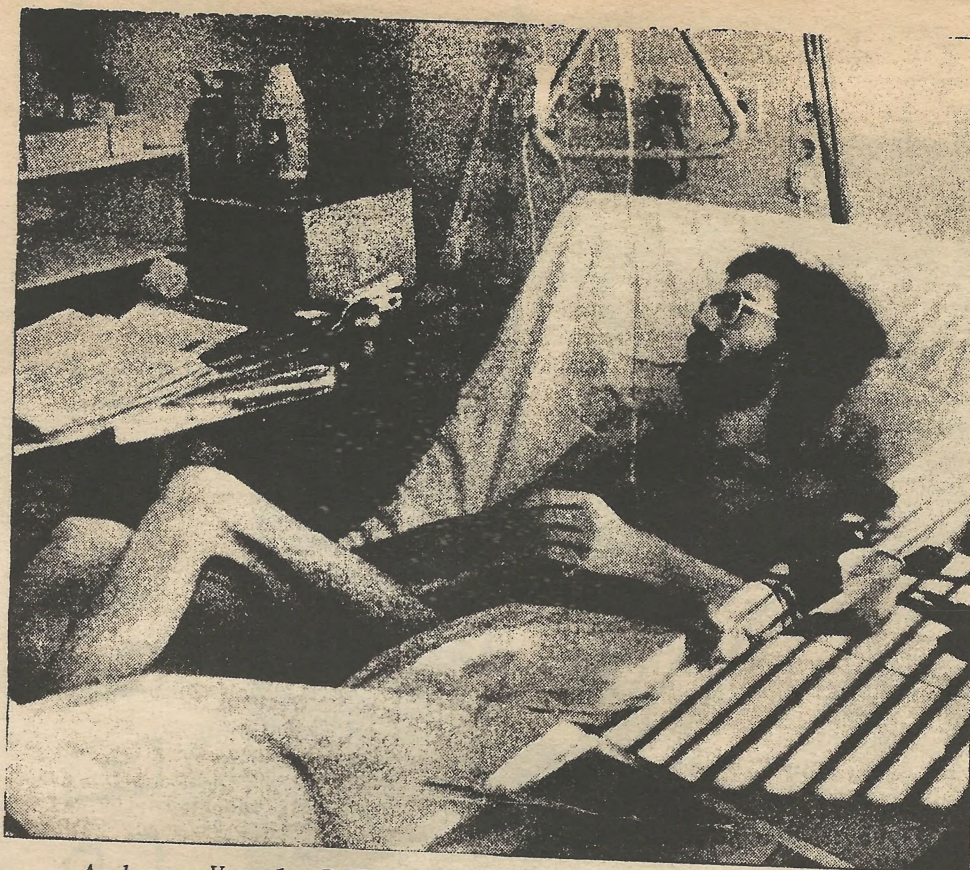
On Feb/1/89, political prisoners from: the Red Army Faction (RAF), an anti-imperialist guerilla organization, the June 2nd movement, a former anti-authoritarian guerilla group and other prisoners from the anti-imperialist resistance and militant social movements in West Germany (FRG) and West Berlin, began an unlimited hungerstrike for the association of political prisoners and against isolation torture and sensory deprivation.

The RAF is the first marxist/communist group to wage organized armed struggle in the FRG since 1923. Dedicated to revolutionary change and fighting the exploitation and suppression machine of imperialism from inside, the RAF has been fighting for 19 years. Their strategy, "fighting from the inside", means waging the struggle from the metropolises, the homelands of imperialism, for example, the U.S., the FRG, Great Britain and France. The actions of the RAF have included: attacking U.S. military bases as well as U.S. and FRG police headquarters, and assassinations of imperialist corporate businessmen. On May 5, 1972, they attacked the headquarters of the U.S. army in Heilidelberg, West Germany, where the central computer which coordinated the U.S. engagements/actions in North Vietnam was installed. Another example was the assassination of the ex-Nazi, Mercedes-Benz manager, Scheleyer in 1977 and the Siemens manager Beckurt in 1986.

The June 2nd movement existed in the 1970's and is well known for the "Lorenz kidnapping". On Feb. 27th, 1975 they kidnapped the West Berlin Christian Democratic Union (CDU) chairperson Peter Lorenz and exchanged him for five political prisoners, Rolf Pohle, Verena Becker, Rolf Heissler, Gabi Kroecker Tiedemann, and Ingrid Siepmann. The CDU is a conservative party which rules FRG in coalition with the FDP (liberals).

The demands of the hungerstrike were contained in a statement released by Helmut Pohl on behalf of political prisoners in the FRG and West Berlin.

Facing one of the most serious and sustained Guerilla movements in Europe, the FRG has developed isolation/sensory deprivation as the weapon of choice. It is a bloodless, clean and effective form of torture. Sensory deprivation torture is exemplified by the "Toten Trakte" (Dead Wings) of Stammheim/Stuttgart where one prisoner is confined alone in an entire wing that has been otherwise vacated. No contact is permitted with any other prisoner what so ever.



Andreas Vogel, RAF prisoner on hungerstrike, 1981.

We demand:

Association together of all prisoners from the guerilla and resistance in one or two large groups, in which new prisoners would be integrated, with access to common yard exercise with all prisoners.

Release of all prisoners for whom a return to health after sickness, injury or torture through isolation is impossible under prison conditions.

Release of Gunter Sonnenberg, Claudia Wannersdorfer, Bernd Rossner and Angelika Goder.

Free choice of medical care for all prisoners without staatsschutz control.

Open political information and communication for prisoners with all groups in society.

The windowless cells are sound proofed; the lights are under the guards control; one hour of solitary yard exercise daily; the mail is rigorously censored and limited; restricted number of books; the wearing of prison uniforms; non-contact visits and they are monitored directly by state security police. RAF prisoner Bernd Rossner has endured 11 years of this form of total isolation.

In their statement, the prisoners announced, that this hungerstrike will be a long and drawn-out struggle and they explained why and how this strike would be different than previous strikes.

"We are now taking on a new form of collective struggle. In the last strike, they made a new law, the 'coma law', which would eliminate hungerstrikes as a means of struggle. The law means that the will and decision making capacity to keep on struggling would be taken from anyone in a coma in a long, drawn-out medical technique manipulation in the intensive care unit. That means, furthermore, for the struggle as a whole, that they want to bring the critical development and decision (as to whether to continue the strike) into a narrow timeframe, practically to the point where many of us, after two or three months, would be simultaneously close to the edge. Then maybe several would die. But then, in a short, frontal confrontation—and the state is prepared to 'endure' it—like they said last time. And then, as they see it, the strike would be over."

"And that would also mean that the means of struggle would be turned against us politically. Because, in this simultaneous culmination for us all, the question of the sense and goal would be thrown back at us, when many are dead, how will the others then want to be together."

"We will turn that against them and carry on a long drawn-out struggle. We are going to begin together. Then after two weeks, we are going to go over into to a chain. All except two will temporarily interrupt the strike; then after two more weeks, the next two will join in again, and then the new two after two more weeks and further on."

This is the pattern that the hungerstrikers followed, though virtually all of the original strikers rejoined on April 1. On April 14, Karl-Heinz Dellwo and Crista Eckes, who had remained on strike since Feb. 1, interrupted their strike after 75 days just before losing consciousness.



Solidarity demonstration, called by fifty different groups, in Hamburg (FRG) on March 17. (The slogan on the banner says; "Hungerstrike-We as family members demand: Association of the political prisoners in large groups. Release of all sick prisoners.")

SOLIDARITY

In solidarity with the original Hungerstrikers, both political and social prisoners throughout the FRG prison system began their own hungerstrikes to back the demands of RAF/Resistance prisoners and to make their own demands. Some of these strikes were temporary while others have continued. As of April 19, seventy prisoners have participated in this political struggle.

The following is a selection of solidarity actions which documents the increase of the revolutionary resistance against the imperialist system. They show that the Hungerstrike of the RAF, the anti-imperialist resistance and the social prisoners are not isolated, but on the contrary, is getting increasing support, comprehension and solidarity from many of the social movements in the FRG.

On Feb. 11/89, 11,000 people, with a large feminist and lesbian contingent, demonstrated for the release of Ingrid Strobl, a feminist, anti-genetic manipulation activist jailed in Dec. 1987 on flimsy evidence linking her to a Rote Zora (Red Zora) bombing. (accused of membership in a terrorist organisation, Rote Zora) So far no one from the Rote Zora has ever been caught. The demonstration was also against Paragraph 129 and 129A in Essen. These laws criminalize and dam up the revolutionary and radical movements and try to prevent any kind of solidarity with militant resistance groups (e.g. RAF, RZ, Automone Zelle Alois Sonnenleitner, Revolutionare Handwerker Amazonen, Anti-rassistische Zellen, Revolutionare Viven, etc). Although the demonstration has been planned for months in advance, the demonstrators declared themselves in solidarity with the demands of the hungerstrikers on banners, in slogans and speeches.

On March 13/89, 34 wimmin from the wimmin-prison West-Berlin-Ploetzensee started a three day token and solidarity hungerstrike to voice the political prisoners demands and also

their own prison conditions. The wimmin denounce among other things that they have to work for 30-40 cents an hour and that political prisoners and social prisoners are held seperated.

On March 17/89, 7-8,000 people participated in a powerful demonstration in Hamburg (FRG) which was called by 50 different political organizations in solidarity with the hungerstrike. The demo was all prepared. People were marching rows with arms linked. In this demo there was a wimmin's block, a revolutionary block, the green party, some unorganized people, a block from the families of the political prisoners and more. Many people were masked with Palestinian scarves because participating in a demo like this can have grave consequences. A family member of a political prisoner and ex-political prisoners made speeches. The demonstration lasted three hours with tracer bullets being shot in the sky. The demonstration passed several justice buildings and the prison where Luitgard Hornstein is imprisoned and many other targets. In front of the prison a short rally was held with a Palestinian comrade, a member of Tayad and Uruguayan Tupamaros (an urban guerilla group). The demo ended at the Hafenstrasse (squatted house in Hamburg-St. Pauli).

On March 22/89, a small group of people shouting slogans and with banners blockaded the West German consulate for an hour in Amsterdam.

Supporters also occupied the main medical building in Hamburg which included the headquarters of the national medical doctors association. After the occupation, the medical association astonishingly declared itself against the "coma-solution", a prisoner entering into unconscious-

ness from not eating, would be repeatedly brought to and from consciousness by medical manipulation, thereby implementing a new form of torture.

Several churches were occupied as well as the city hall in West Berlin, in order to bring attention to the strike. The Families of Political Prisoners occupied the Department of Justice building in Dusseldorf.

In the early morning of April 12, 7 masked people stormed into the biggest stock exchange in the FRG, in Frankfurt, throwing molotovs that heavily damaged the computer terminals of the in house system. Unfortunately, three of the seven were busted by the pigs.

On the same day, also in solidarity with the hungerstrike, a multinational war corporation, AEG, was attacked with incendiary bombs, which caused damage to the building.

The writing expert in the trial against Eva-Haule Frimpong (RAF), Mr. Ockelmann, was doubtlessly surprised when he went out one morning and found his super-expensive car burnt out. Many banks have also been the targets of molotov attacks.

There has been more than fifty demos, including one of 3,500 people in West Berlin.

There have been nine previous hungerstrikes since the early 70's and two RAF prisoners have been killed. They were Holger Meins on 9/11/74 and Sigurd Debus on 16/4/81. Both prisoners were force fed during their hungerstrikes and died because not enough calories were present in the force fed food to keep them alive.

Also several other RAF prisoners were killed by West Germany's fascist murdergang in 1976 and 77.

Most of the hungerstrikes in the past were accompanied constantly

with militant resistance actions. The last hungerstrike ended when a commando of the RAF executed the MTU manager, Zimmermann (MTU is a big war corporation).

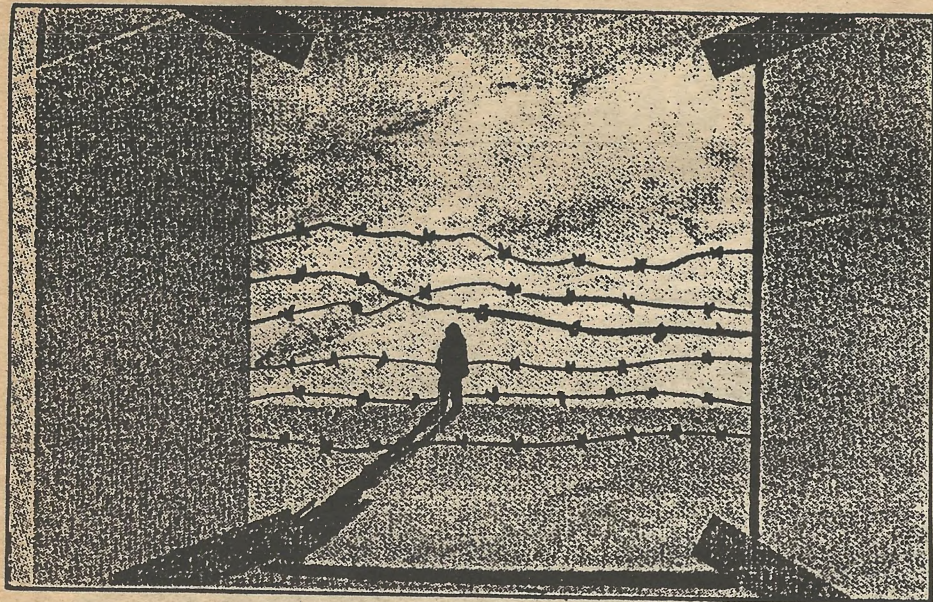
In an unprecedented united action an estimated 250 political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S. joined in a symbolic 24-hour protest fast on March 15th with political prisoners on hungerstrike in Azania and FRG (West Germany).

Issuing a nationwide "call for solidarity" from the D.C. jail, six anti-imperialist political prisoners convicted in the Resistance Conspiracy Case, accused of bombing the U.S. capital in 1983, declared the reasons for the protest/fast: "Both of these hungerstrikes are unlimited (to the death), and represent the ultimate means of protest for any prisoners. In extending support to the hungerstrikers, the prisoners identify and demand an end to the weapons of political repression that have been employed against activists in the U.S. as well. Preventive detention in its form (grand jury subpoenas, exorbitant or no-bail, frame-up charges) and isolation, exemplified by the Marion and Lexington federal control units, are used with greater frequency in this country under the doctrine of 'anti-terrorism'."

"While the Azania detainees' hungerstrike has received some international attention from the major media, news of the RAF/Resistance has been totally ignored outside the FRG."



ISOLATION IS TORTURE



Claudia Wannersdorfer

-sentenced in 1985 to 8 years after an attack on the "German Research Institute for Aviation and Space Travel".

This attack happened during the 9th hungerstrike by political prisoners in support of their struggle to be released from isolation. In carrying out the action Claudia sustained serious injuries and her comrade and friend Jonas Timme was killed. Since her arrest, Claudia has been under the very conditions she acted against: Isolation.

After 2½ years in isolation, the first symptoms of an epileptic condition appeared, and on July 16, 1988, Claudia had a major seizure. She fell down, injured her head and knee, and was found unconscious the next morning when the prison guards open-

ed the door. She has since had several more seizures and has hurt herself in the resulting falls. Because of the danger of these seizures occurring in isolation, her lawyers have applied for association with at least one other political prisoner, but the federal state prosecutor has refused.

Angelika Gooder

-a member of the defunct June 2nd Movement. arrested in West Berlin in 1978 and sentenced to 15 years behind bars.

Within three years of her arrest she was diagnosed with arthritis in her hip joints and had lost much of the flexibility in her hips. In spite of regular treatments, the disease worsened by the summer of 1984 and she required surgery. Angelika's lawyers applied for access to an op-

eration in a public hospital. After a wait of two years, the application was granted. When Angelika arrived at the hospital, she was greeted with hundreds of bulls (German slang for cops) surrounding the hospital,

more bulls on floors surrounding the operating room, and more inside the hospital room. All these cops were there for the "surveillance" of one prisoner. Angelika refused to have the operation under these conditions, and it was not until 1988 (another two year wait) that the state offered another operation in West Germany without surveillance in the operating room. In the meantime, the conditions of Angelika's detention had changed for the worse. In 1984/85, she was in a group with five other wimmin, then she was moved to a group of three wimmin, and now she is isolated with one other prisoner, Gabriele Rollnik. Under these present conditions of isolation it would be impossible for Angelika to convalesce after the operation, and so she has once again refused surgery.

Bernd Rossner

-sentenced to two consecutive life terms.

In 1985, he and five comrades of the RAF occupied the FRG embassy in Stockholm (Sweden) to demand the release of 26 RAF political prisoners in exchange for the embassy staff. The embassy was stormed by a special cop commando unit and two RAF members were killed. Bernd has spent ten years in total isolation, and as a result of this torture he is having great difficulties with concentration and is suffering from severe exhaustion. He is no longer able to read or communicate for any substantial

period of time (this report from Lohr, a student priest who visited him). His condition is so bad that he is not able to participate in the hungerstrike. Irreparable damage to his mental and physical health is a strong possibility unless he is immediately released.

Gunter Sonnenberg

-member of the RAF, sentenced to life.

In May, 1977, during his arrest, he was seriously injured by a gunshot wound to the head. As a result, he lost basic knowledge and skills including reading and writing, and large parts of his memory. All of this he has tried to regain under conditions of strict isolation. Another result of his injury was a form of epilepsy, for which he has to take medication for several years. Not only is this drug addictive, but it also suppresses considerably sensual perception and mental and physical expression and response. Because of these serious side effects Gunter has made repeated attempts to stop the administration of the drug. Without the drug, however, there is danger of renewed epileptic attacks especially during the detoxification period. Gunter's lawyers have applied several times for him to be reintegrated with other political prisoners but these applications have been denied. He continues to be held in strict isolation 23 hours a day. The only interruption being one hour of yard exercise with one other political prisoner.

The unanimous opinion of several independent medical experts is that Gunter Sonnenberg should have been freed a long time ago. In isolation the continued dangers of his illness not only cannot be avoided, but will most certainly be aggravated.

UPDATE

On April 29/89, 10,000 people, mostly Autonome and Anti-Imperialists, participated in a powerful demonstration in Bonn, the capital of the FRG, in solidarity with the hunger strikers. Autonomous and anti-imperialist groups called this demo.

On May 2/89, an Autonome cell attacked the Daimler-Benz-AG (a big multinational corporation) in Freiburg and caused approximately 100,000 West German mark damage.

On May 12/89, the political prisoners announced the end of the hunger strike although the demands of the hunger strike were not totally accomplished. The Minister of Justice in the SPD (Social Democratic Party) governed states (West Berlin, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Schleswig-Holstein) announced that they would associate prisoners in their states in groups of six and integrate them into the "normal" prison system. But that doesn't mean that total isolation is abolished. Political prisoners who are held in preventive detention while awaiting their trial are still kept in total isolation (23 hours alone in a cell and one hour of yard exercise a day). There are 11 federal states, but only 3 of them promised to associate political prisoners. The situation in all other states is totally unclear about what kind of deal the prisoners will get.*

No one of the seriously sick prisoners got released, only Angelika Gooder was promised have surgery without pig surveillance and not to be placed back in isolation after the surgery. This hunger strike was successful in other ways as well. It raised consciousness about prison conditions used as torture to destroy the identity of almost everybody who doesn't conform to the system and about state repression and counter-insurgency programs to dam up the mass-struggle and insurrection.

Despite political differences between Autonomes and Anti-Imperialists, they have learned to work to-

gether and to recognize their common goals, to fight the imperialist and patriarchal system.

The demands, supported by thousands of revolutionaries, liberals, christians, Humanists and individualists, were not all achieved. It seems like not all the prisoners nor the anti-imperialist and autonomous movements were satisfied with the agreement. However at the moment there is no more information.

* the most famous and perfect maximum security prison in the F.R.G. in Stuttgart-Stammheim, well-known as the leader in sensory deprivation, torture and isolation, is in a CDU (Christian Democratic Union/Conservatives) governed federal state, Baden-Wurtemberg.



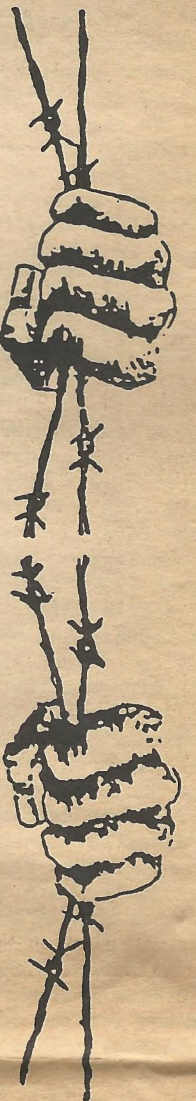
Holger Meins, killed by authorities in 1974.

THE VANCOUVER ABC

The Vancouver ABC is an autonomous section of the International Anarchist Black Cross. We came together in late 1987 to begin work locally. Some of the ongoing work that we've been involved in since this formation has included demonstrations on behalf of Katsuhisa Omori, publicizing the situation of prisoners in need and prison conditions, sending material aid when possible, keeping in contact with prisoners through correspondence and disseminating information on prisoners and prison conditions through No Picnic, the Ecomedia network and Stark Raven on Co-op Radio (102.7 FM). There is a list of prisoners that the International ABC does solidarity work with. Locally we develop our own contacts and projects. The reality of the situation is that the vast majority of prisoners don't call themselves anarchists. We base our connections and work solely on affinity and on an individual basis. If you're curious about our activities or would like to take part drop us a line.

Our support of the hunger strike is solely on the level of being in solidarity with the prisoners taking action against the totally repressive prisons of West Germany. Some of us do not fully support the politics of some of the groups that were participating such as the Red Army Faction.

The Vancouver ABC would like to thank our West Berlin correspondent for all his trouble in translating the information. For more information on the hunger strike, drop us a line. (a couple of bucks would be appreciated.)



EMERGENCY APPEAL

America's only political prisoner on death row, Mumia Abu-Jamal, has been denied his appeal to have his death sentence overturned by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Mumia's appeal had also demanded a new trial. The March 6th high court decision ignored a multitude of fair trial violations and refused to consider the political motivations which were central in prosecuting Mumia and getting him sentenced to death.

"As a former Black Panther Party spokesman and an outspoken MOVE supporter, Jamal has been in the cross hairs of Philadelphia's racist killer cops for over twenty years," said Partisan Defense Ctte. At the time of his arrest, Jamal was President of the Association of Black Journalists in Philadelphia. He earned the cops' undying hatred especially for his sympathetic interviews with imprisoned MOVE members after the 1978 cop siege.

Mumia was framed up in the killing of a Philadelphia policeman in 1981. At the 1982 sentencing hearing, the prosecutor argued for the death sentence by claiming that Jamal's having been a member of the Black Panther Party showed he was a committed cop-killer. The jury was assured that the death penalty would never be carried out that Jamal would

have "appeal after appeal". For years the Pennsylvania Supreme Court had held in other cases that the obviously fake argument mandated automatic reversal of the death sentence upon review. But in its March 6th decision the court ignored its own precedent in its push to silence Mumia by execution.

Mumia was targetted because of what he wrote and said, because of who he is: a radical Black man who became known as "THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS". At his trial, Mumia was denied counsel of his own choice. To get a hanging jury of 11 whites, the court permitted the seating of a white juror who admitted he could not be impartial, while excluding 12 prospective black jurors simply on the prosecutions request.

Jamal's appeal was supported by amici curiae (friends of the court) briefs from ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) and the National Conf. of Black Lawyers. Ron Dellums, now chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, appealed to Pennsylvania's Gov. Casey "to remove the cloud of death from Mr. Abu-Jamal" in a letter last November. Thousands of people around the nation have petitioned the governor to demand "MUMIA ABU JAMAL MUST NOT DIE" as part of a campaign initiated by the Partisan Defence Committee.



TELEGRAMS AND LETTERS SHOULD BE SENT NOW TO THE GOVERNOR:

Gov. Casey
Main Capitol Bldg.
Room 225
Harrisburg, PA 17120

FOR PETITIONS AND MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 99
Canal Street Station
New York, NY 10013